



The President's Daily Brief

24 October 1969



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Arab states are still in an uproar about the Lebanon-fedayeen crisis, but thus far President Hili retains control. (Page 1)



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Ambassador Castro reports from La Paz that Ovando is badly shaken and perhaps is no longer in control. (Page 4)

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

By rescinding an earlier order for security forces to disarm the occupants of Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, President Hilu has kept his crisis generally under control. He met yesterday with a number of local dignitaries and representatives of other Arab states, but achieved no evident progress toward a solution to the problem.

In a wrap-up of the situation yesterday, Ambassador Porter pointed out that Lebanon has shown great resilience and capacity for political survival in the past and stated that it could happen again, but he added that in the process Hilu will have to back down on the fedayeen issue. Hilu's real problem is how far to give in to domestic and foreign pressures to regain a semblance of stability and yet avoid an ignominious cave-in.

In Syria, large anti-Lebanese, anti-Husayn, and anti-US demonstrations took place yesterday, but there have been no more reports of armed incursions from Syria into Lebanon. Anti-Lebanese demonstrations also continued in Jordan, but Husayn remained generally noncommittal, in public at least.

Husayn's problems with the fedayeen have thus far been less acute than Hilu's, but Husayn must be increasingly concerned at the influence of the guerrilla organizations on the loyalty of the Jordanian armed forces. There seems to be no threat to the king--involving either his personal safety or his overthrow--but his authority becomes more limited as the fedayeen becomes stronger.

In Israel, Prime Minister Meir blamed "Arab infiltrators" for the recent bombing of apartment houses in Haifa. [redacted]

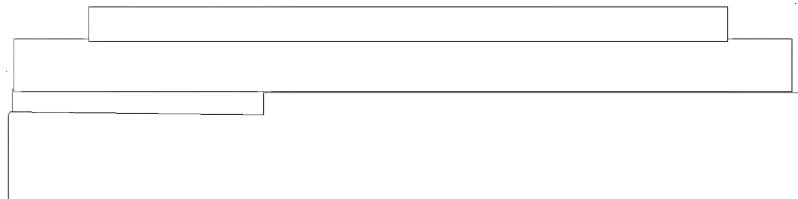
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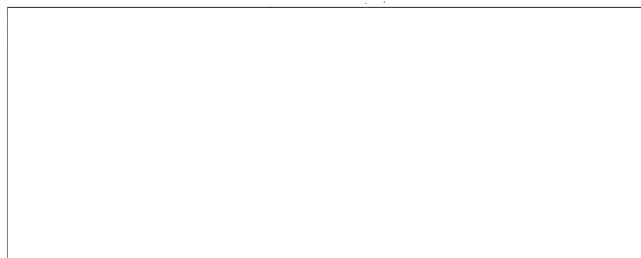
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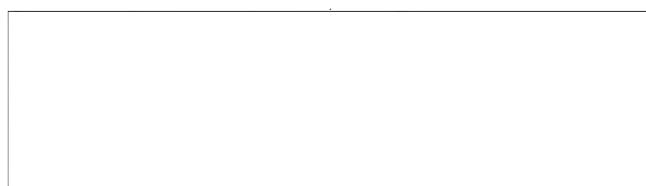
LEBANON-EGYPT-USSR



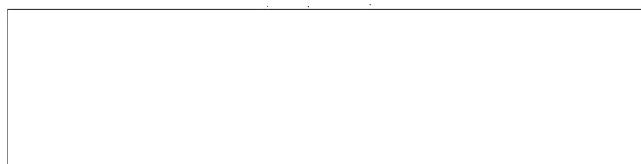
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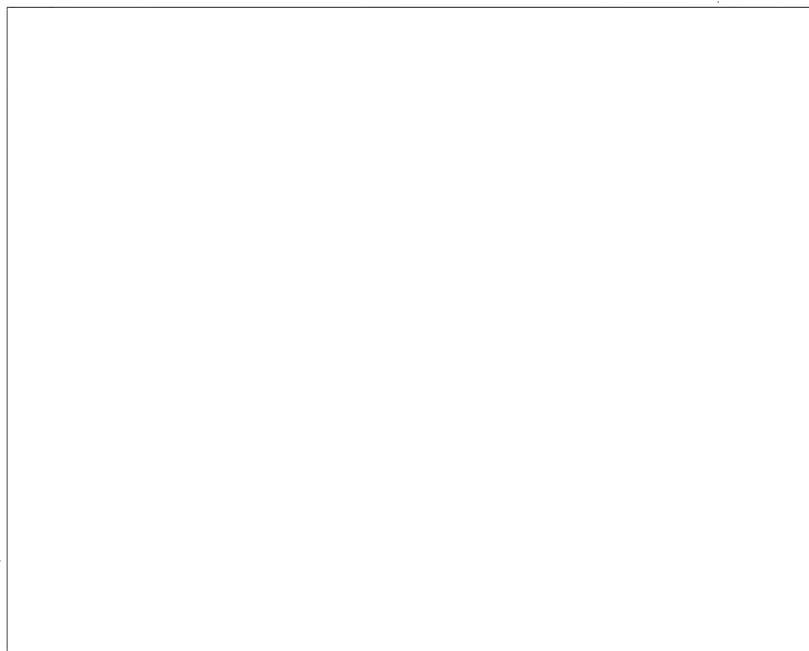
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BOLIVIA

Ambassador Castro met with President Ovando on 22 October, and reports that the general appeared "tired, discouraged, tattered and torn," and gave the impression that he was no longer the "master of his ship." Although outwardly friendly, Ovando was noncommittal on every question raised and gave the appearance of a man unable to redeem even the few commitments he had made.

It appears that the leftist and extremely nationalistic civilians Ovando originally appointed to the cabinet to give himself greater appeal to the masses have taken the initiative and are now directing the government's actions.

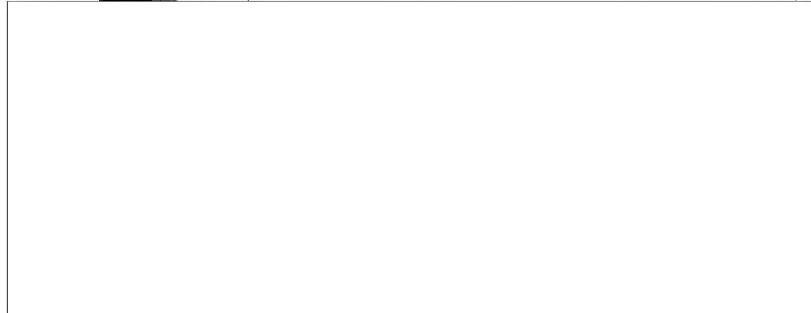
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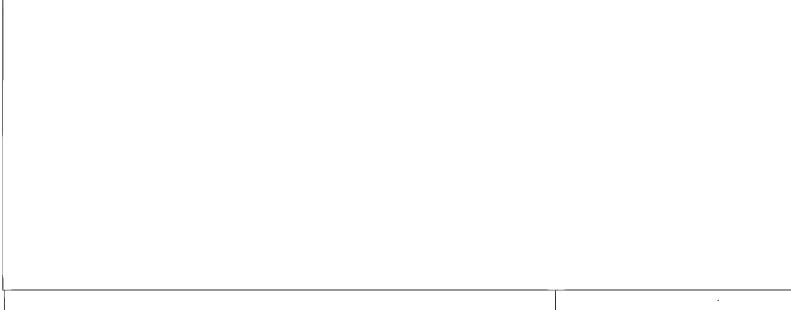
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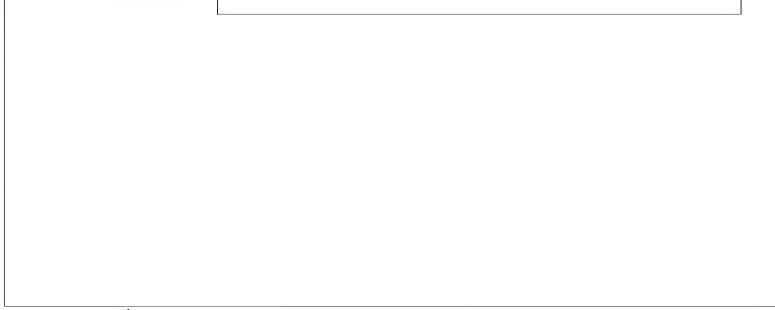
Japan:



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Sweden:



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Mexico: Minister of Government Luis Echeverria, nominated Tuesday to be the presidential candidate of the ruling party and thus destined to become president, is now the de facto leader of Mexico. Although his inauguration is more than a year away, party chiefs and bureaucrats are maneuvering for position in his six-year administration. Ambassador McBride describes Echeverria as a powerful personality who will head a government as strong as any since the Revolution of 1910; his antipathy toward demonstrations will lead him to be tough on any students or others who disturb Mexican calm and serenity. Echeverria's basically favorable attitude toward the US will enable him to be an effective friend, but Ambassador McBride warns that future incidents such as those caused by "Operation Intercept" would produce a stronger reaction than that of President Diaz Ordaz.

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